

[Rollcall Vote No. 386 Ex.]

## YEAS—73

Baldwin	Grassley	Reed
Barrasso	Hassan	Risch
Bennet	Heinrich	Romney
Blackburn	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hirono	Rounds
Blunt	Hoeven	Sanders
Booker	Johnson	Schatz
Brown	Kaine	Schumer
Burr	Kelly	Scott (SC)
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Capito	Klobuchar	Sinema
Cardin	Leahy	Smith
Carper	Lujan	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Collins	Markey	Tillis
Coons	McConnell	Toomey
Cornyn	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warner
Cramer	Murkowski	Warnock
Crapo	Murphy	Warren
Duckworth	Murray	Whitehouse
Durbin	Ossoff	Wyden
Fischer	Padilla	Young
Gillibrand	Peters	
Graham	Portman	

## NAYS—26

Boozman	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Braun	Inhofe	Sasse
Cassidy	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lankford	Shelby
Cruz	Lee	Sullivan
Daines	Lummis	Thune
Ernst	Marshall	Tuberville
Hagerty	Moran	Wicker
Hawley	Paul	

## NOT VOTING—1

Feinstein

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJÁN). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the next nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Monica P. Medina, of Maryland, to be Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs.

## RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:27 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. OSOFF).

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

## AFGHANISTAN

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I come to the floor to offer some brief remarks today in the wake of the Armed Services Committee hearing today on the evacuation of Afghanistan and the end to U.S. troop presence there. I watched it with some interest. I watched it knowing that three out of four Americans support President Biden's decision to bring U.S. troops home from Afghanistan.

We learned some new things today in the hearing. Others were confirmed. First, we learned, once again, of the extraordinary bravery and capability of our diplomats and our soldiers, who worked under incredibly difficult conditions for a period of weeks to airlift almost 130,000 individuals out of Afghanistan. That is absolutely remarkable, especially given, as we heard today in testimony, that the goal at the outset, in the best case scenario, was to get 60 to 70 to 80,000 people out. In the end, the United States of America, our military and our diplomats, got 130,000 people out.

We heard, also, about the impossible position that President Biden inherited; that there was a commitment made to withdraw American troops by President Trump but no plan with which to do it safely. We heard about how the Doha agreement decreased the readiness of the Afghan forces, how it weakened their position internally.

We heard about the choice that faced President Biden when he came into office. We heard about the fact that, had we chosen to stay, we would have had to surge troops; that the Taliban, having gotten to the precipice of provincial capitals, would have engaged in a level of urban warfare that would have required the United States to increase our troop presence there in order to be able to stand up an effective resistance to the Taliban.

To the extent that Republicans view this as a political game and they were looking for points to be scored today, I guess the one point they feel they scored was an admission by the generals who testified that some of them had recommended staying in Afghanistan.

Now, I have tremendous respect for our generals. I think they get it right more than they get it wrong. They provide very able advice to the Commander in Chief. But for 20 years, in Afghanistan, our generals recommended staying, in the face of mounting evidence, year after year, that it was going to be impossible to be able to stand up an Afghan military that could protect the country and an Afghan Government that could govern the country. Our generals recommended staying—year after year after year, month after month after month—despite the fact that many analysts told us that as soon as we left and the Taliban took over, the Afghan Government and the military would fall.

Now, they did it because our military is bred to believe that anything is possible. It speaks, in some part, to the best of American military ethos, the idea that there is no obstacle that cannot be surmounted, that cannot be climbed by U.S. forces. But the task they were given by President after President was one that could not be carried out.

And to simply believe that because the general said “stay another year” or “stay another 5 years,” this Com-

mander in Chief should have listened, despite the fact that it had been proven that the mission that we were given in that country was impossible, is to compound a mistake—an unnecessary mistake—that the United States engaged in for far, far too long.

And so my hope is that moving forward, this Congress and this Senate are going to engage in real oversight. There is no doubt the evacuation could have been done better. There is no doubt that, in a mission this complicated, the Biden team would have done things differently. But the real question is, Why did we stay in Afghanistan for 10 years too long? Why did we keep believing that we could train-up a military that would be capable of defending the country?

It is time that we have a deep inquiry in this Senate about the limits of American military power overseas and how badly misresourced we are when we spend 10 to 20 times as much money on military power as we do on other means of projecting American power.

It is also important for us to understand the cost of getting bogged down in places like Afghanistan and Iraq. It is not a coincidence that shortly after withdrawing from Afghanistan, we were able to announce this new partnership with Australia and Britain to better protect our mutual interests in the Pacific theater.

It is because, when the entirety of the U.S. defense and foreign policy infrastructure is so trained on unwinnable contests in far off places like Afghanistan, it doesn't allow us the capacity and the creativity to be able to design new systems and new structures with which to protect the country.

China celebrated every single year that we remain bogged down in Afghanistan. Russia celebrated every single year that we doubled down on that mistake. Now we have the ability to turn our attention to fights that truly matter.

We learned some things in the Armed Services Committee today. I think what we learned confirms that the decision that President Biden made to pull our troops out was the right one. It is a decision supported by the American people because it allows this country, finally, to focus on fights that are winnable in reality, not just on paper.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

If no one yields time, the time will be charged equally to both sides.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

## UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2868

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, last night, Senate Republicans voted unanimously to make a default and a shutdown far more likely and in doing so, solidified themselves as the party of default, the party that says America does not pay its debts.

Now, despite yesterday's stunning display of obstruction, the fact remains